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WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A data updating method for updating data stored in a memory of an image forming apparatus, comprising:

5 sending electronic mail from an external device to the image forming apparatus to call for updating of the data stored in the memory of the image forming apparatus;

10 downloading updating data from a device on a network based on contents of the electronic mail when the electronic mail from the external device has been received by the image forming apparatus; and

 executing updating processing for the data stored in the memory, based on the downloaded updating data.

15 2. The data updating method for the image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the electronic mail sent from the external device includes information indicating data to be updated, and information indicating which device on the network holds the
20 updating data.

 3. The data updating method for the image forming apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said executing updating processing includes: writing the updating data once again if the writing of the updating data in the
25 memory fails and a number of times of failure is within a predetermined number; and determining that an error occurs in data updating processing if the number of

times of failure reaches said predetermined number.

4. The data updating method for the image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

causing the image forming apparatus to notify the
5 external device of a result of the data updating processing.

5. The data updating method for the image forming apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

determining whether or not data updating is
10 necessary based on the contents of the electronic mail when the image forming apparatus has received the electronic mail from the external device, and

wherein the updating data is downloaded from the device on the network based on the contents of the
15 electronic mail when the data updating is determined to be necessary.

6. The data updating method for the image forming apparatus according to claim 5, wherein

the electronic mail sent from the external device
20 includes version information on data to be updated; and

said determining whether or not the data updating is necessary includes comparing the version information included in the electronic mail with version information on the data stored in the memory, and
25 determining whether or not updating is required with respect to the data stored in the memory.

7. The data updating method for the image forming

apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising:

causing the image forming apparatus to notify the external device that data updating based on the electronic mail is unnecessary, when the data updating is determined to be unnecessary.

8. An image forming apparatus which stores data in a memory beforehand and comprises:

a network interface which receives from an external device electronic mail calling for updating of the data stored in the memory and through which updating data is downloaded from a device on a network based on contents of the electronic mail in response to the reception of the electronic mail; and

a CPU which executes updating processing for the data stored in the memory based on the updating data downloaded by the network interface.

9. The image forming apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the electronic mail sent from the external device includes information indicating data to be updated, and information indicating which device on the network holds the updating data.

10. The image forming apparatus according to claim 8, wherein said CPU writes the updating data once again if the writing of the updating data in the memory fails and a number of times of failure is within a predetermined number, and determines that an error occurs in data updating processing if the number of

15. An image forming system comprising: an image forming apparatus which stores data in a memory thereof beforehand; and an external device capable of exchanging electronic mail with the image forming apparatus,

said external device including a modem which sends electronic mail to the image forming apparatus to call for updating of the data stored in the memory of the image forming apparatus, and

said image forming apparatus includes: a network interface through which updating data is downloaded from a device on a network based on contents of the electronic mail in response to the reception of that electronic mail; and a CPU which executes updating processing for the data stored in the memory based on the updating data downloaded by the network interface.

16. The image forming system according to claim 15, wherein the electronic mail sent from the external device includes information indicating data to be updated, and information indicating which device on the network holds the updating data.

17. The image forming system according to claim 15, wherein said CPU writes the updating data once again if the writing of the updating data in the memory fails and a number of times of failure is within a predetermined number, and determines that an error occurs in data updating processing if the number of

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times of failure reaches said predetermined number.

18. The image forming apparatus according to claim 15, wherein said CPU causes the network interface to notify the external device of a result of the data
5 updating processing.

19. The image forming system according to claim 15, wherein said CPU determines whether or not data updating is necessary based on the contents of the electronic mail when the image forming apparatus has
10 received the electronic mail from the external device, and

said network interface enables the updating data to be downloaded from the device on the network based on the contents of the electronic mail when the data
15 updating is determined to be necessary.

20. The image forming system according to claim 19, wherein the electronic mail sent from the external device includes version information on data to be updated, and said CPU determines whether or not the
20 data updating is necessary by comparing the version information included in the electronic mail with version information on the data stored in the memory.

21. The image forming system according to claim 19, wherein said CPU causes the network interface to notify the external device that data updating based
25 on the electronic mail is unnecessary, when the data updating is determined to be unnecessary.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

Electronic mail is sent from an external device to an image forming apparatus to call for updating of the data stored in a memory of the image forming apparatus.

5 Upon reception of the image forming apparatus, the image forming apparatus downloads updating data from a device on a network on the basis of the contents of the electronic mail. Based on the downloaded updating data, the image forming apparatus executes updating
10 processing for the data stored in the memory.